

COVENANT OF FELLOWSHIP

GRACE CHURCH UNAFFILIATED - 6901 SAN ANTONIO NE ALBUQUERQUE,  
NEW MEXICO 87109

Adopted – November 3, 1977

Revised – May 5, 2015

Revised – February 7, 2019

Revised – March 8, 2020

## ARTICLE I - STATEMENT OF FAITH

### We subscribe to the following doctrines:

**The Trinity:** The triune God, Father (Genesis 1:1), Son (John 10:30), and Holy Spirit (John 4:24).

**Verbal Inspiration:** The verbal inspiration and plenary authority of both Old and New Testament (II Timothy 3:16,17).

**Total Depravity:** The depravity and lost condition of all men by nature (Romans 3:19).

**Personality of Satan:** The personality of Satan (Job 1:6,7).

**Virgin Birth:** The virgin birth and deity of Jesus Christ, our Lord (Luke 1:35).

**Blood Atonement:** The shed blood of Jesus Christ, the only atonement for sins (Romans 3:25).

**Resurrection:** The bodily resurrection and Lordship of Jesus (Acts 2:32-36; I Timothy 2:5).

**Justification by Faith:** Justification on the single ground of faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ (Acts 13:38, 39).

**Person and Work of the Holy Spirit:** The personality of the Holy Spirit, who convicts the world of sin, and regenerates, indwells, enlightens, and guides the believer (John 16:8; I Corinthians 3:16).

**Eternal Security:** The eternal security of all believers (John 10:28,29).

**The Gifts of the Spirit:** Gifts given to each believer by the Holy Spirit for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11, 12).

**The Church:** The saved in this dispensation; all members of the Body of Christ, the Church (I Corinthians 12:12, 13).

**The Priesthood of all Believers:** The acceptance of every believer as a priest to offer, petitions, ministries, and intercessions to God, because of the intercessory work of Jesus Christ, our High Priest (I Peter 2:5; Revelation 1:6; Hebrews 3:1, 4:14, 7:24, 25, 10:21,22).

**The separation from the World:** A life of separation from all worldly and sinful practices by those who are saved (James 4:4; Romans 12:2; I John 2:16; II Corinthians 6:14).

**Two Natures:** The possession of two natures by those who are born again; they may be victorious over the old through the power of the new, but eradication of the old is unscriptural (Romans 6:13; 8:12; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:1-10; I Peter 1:14-16; I John 3:5-9).

**Missions:** The obligation of the saved to witness by life and word to these truths and to proclaim the Gospel to all the world (Acts 1:8).

**Hell:** The eternal, conscious punishment of all unsaved men (Matthew 25:46; Revelation 20:14-15).

**Second Coming of Christ:** The personal, pre-millennial, and imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 1:11; I Thessalonians 4:16-17).

## ARTICLE II - COVENANT

We, the membership of Grace Church are followers of Jesus Christ, who lived a sinless life, died to pay the penalty for our sins, was resurrected and who now sits at the right hand of God the Father.

We believe:

- Everyone is invited to receive forgiveness and eternal life through faith in Jesus. (John 3:16, 2 Peter 3:9)
- It is our responsibility to share this news so that ever more people can become part of God's family. (Matthew 28:19)
- We will be most effective in this mission by gathering together for mutual support, encouragement and collaboration. (Hebrews 10:24-25, Colossians 3:16)

We therefore commit to:

- gathering together frequently for mutual encouragement (1 Thessalonians 5:11), worshiping together (Ephesians 5:19,20) and studying the Scriptures together (1 Timothy 4:13).
- growing in our love for Jesus and for each other (John 13:34,35).
- sharing the love of Jesus and the good news about Jesus with those who have not yet believed (Matthew 25:40, Romans 1:16).
- exercising our faith by sacrificing the time, talents, strength, financial resources and social standing that God has entrusted to us in order to advance His Kingdom (Romans 12:1, 1 Corinthians 9:22, 1 Peter 4:10).
- forgiving each other even as we have been forgiven (Colossians 3:13).
- setting the needs of our fellow believers above our own (Ephesians 5:21, Galatians 5:13).
- living holy lives that are worthy of our Lord Jesus as we eagerly anticipate His return (Colossians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).
- submitting to the loving oversight and discipline of the members and governing elders of Grace Church.

## ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

**Requirements:** Believers who desire to become members of Grace Church must:

- have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and be born of the Spirit
  - give testimony of a personal relationship with Christ to a member of the Shepherding Council
  - recognize the Statement of Faith (Article I) as the doctrinal position of Grace Church
  - accept the commitments of membership (Article II)

**Termination:** Individual membership of Grace Church may be terminated through:

- Transfer or resignation
- Absence for one year without communication
- Disciplinary action by the Shepherding Council

## ARTICLE IV – CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Grace Church has elders according to the NT. They are to care for the flock by protecting, being an example to, and praying for them. (Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:2-3, Titus 1:9 & 11) They are to oversee the flock by praying for those in need and exhorting them. (James 5:14-15 & Titus 1:9) They are to lead the flock by teaching and governing the flock. (1 Timothy 3:2-5 & 5:17)

To function in these three roles: Shepherding Elder, Governing Board Member, or Senior Pastor must adhere to the spiritual qualifications of an Elder as given in I Timothy 3:1-17 and Titus 1:5-10. These Scriptures exhort an Elder to reflect Jesus Christ in his total life. The church leadership will function in a spirit of unity, seek the leading and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and maintain open communication with one another. Grace Church leadership will subscribe to the Covenant of Fellowship and the Statement of Faith of Grace Church.

A. Functions: The Scriptures identify at least six Elder functions:

1. to shepherd and feed the flock SPIRITUALLY (Acts 20:28, I Peter 5:2)
2. to be an example to the flock (I Peter 5:3)
3. to teach and exhort the flock (I Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:9)

4. to protect the flock from false teachings (Titus 1:9,11)
5. to pray for the sick in the flock (James 5:14-15)
6. to rule or govern the flock (I Timothy 3:5, 5:17)

B. Government: The spiritual and corporate responsibilities are vested in two separate groups.

- The Spiritual responsibilities of Grace Church are vested in the Shepherding Council. There is no maximum limit to the number of Elders who serve on this Council. Elders are chosen by majority vote of the Shepherding Council according to the Elder Qualifications document of Grace Church. Each Shepherd will serve a one (1) year term that may be renewed every year if the Shepherd desires to continue serving in that capacity and still meets the requires of an Elder at Grace Church. The Senior Pastor is a member of the Shepherding Council. The Senior Pastor serves as the leader of the Shepherding Council but may appoint a Lead Shepherd to oversee this group. A Grace Church Elder serves on the Shepherding Council and with the responsibility to provide Spiritual: Care, Oversight, and Leadership.

- The corporate responsibilities of Grace Church are vested in the Governing BOARD. There are at least four Governing BOARD MEMBERS and they serve three-year terms. They may serve two consecutive terms. New Governing BOARD MEMBERS are chosen by majority decision of the existing Governing BOARD MEMBERS from the membership of Grace Church Shepherding Elder Council. In the selection process they are responsive to the needs of the congregation. A Governing BOARD MEMBER may resign at any time or be removed from office by a majority vote of all the other Governing BOARD MEMBERS. The Governing BOARD MEMBERS will subscribe to the Covenant of Fellowship and the Statement of Faith of Grace Church. They will operate according to the GOVERNANCE POLICIES OF GRACE CHURCH.

C. Meetings: An Annual Meeting of the Governing BOARD is held with the members of Grace Church for the purpose of hearing reports, sharing long-range plans, and other business which naturally comes before the Church. By majority vote, members approve the Annual Budget. The Annual Meeting is held each year on May 1st (or as soon thereafter as practicable).

D. Pastors: The Governing Board has the responsibility of calling the Senior Pastor at Grace Church. The Governing Board may delegate the search for a Senior Pastor to a committee of members or a search firm, but final selection is made by majority decision of all the Governing BOARD. In the selection process, the Governing BOARD is responsive to the needs of the congregation of Grace Church.

- The Senior Pastor is chosen for an indefinite term and serves at the pleasure of the Governing Board. He must subscribe to the Covenant of Fellowship and Statement of Faith, and they recognize and submit to the authority of the Governing Board. The Senior Pastors' responsibilities will be defined by the Governing Board in the Governance Policy Document of Grace Church.

- Other pastors at Grace Church: According to Ephesians 4:11, the term "pastor" refers to a gift, and not an office or position. The pastors teach, train and equip the Body to function as a mature entity. Therefore, with the exception of the Senior Pastor, the Shepherding Council will determine who may be ordained as a pastor at Grace Church.

- Ordination: In order to meet the needs of the flock, the Shepherding Council may ordain Elders, Pastors, Deacons, Deaconesses, and others from among the membership of Grace Church to recognize God's calling and gifting.

E. Decisions: Wherever in this Covenant of Fellowship reference has been made for majority vote of the Governing Board and Shepherding Council, such reference is to render this Covenant of Fellowship consistent with the Constitution and by-laws. However, it is the desire of all members of Grace Church Governing Board and Shepherding Council make every attempt to govern and lead this church in the spirit of unity.

F. Church Discipline: Discipline for the members of Grace Church is entrusted to the Shepherding Council and is exercised in a loving and corrective spirit in accordance with Scriptural principles (Matthew 5:23-24, Matthew 18:15-17, Galatians 6:1-2, I Timothy 5:19-20). The goal of such discipline is the glory of God, the welfare and purity of the Body and the spiritual growth of the individual.

## **ARTICLE V - AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to the Covenant of Fellowship are adopted only by a two-thirds vote of the membership of Grace Church present at the Annual Meeting or at a special meeting called by the Governing Elders for this purpose.

## **ARTICLE VI – SIGN GIFTS**

Grace Church does not practice any of the sign gifts, including tongues, in any of its meetings.